

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05177 171608Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5533
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5177

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PBOR, MILI, IS, LE
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON

1. CALLED ON FONMIN BOUTROS MORNING OCT. 17 TO DISCUSS
SOUTH LEBANON. HE HAD CALLED ME SATURDAY NIGHT TO SAY THAT
THE DAY (OCT. 15) HAD PASSED PEACEFULLY, BUT THAT ON THE
OTHER HAND PALESTINIANS WERE TRYING TO POSE CONDITIONS FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT WHICH LEBANESE
COULD NOT ACCEPT. HE HAD HOPED TO HAVE SOMETHING MORE
DEFINITE FOR ME THIS MORNING.

2. THIS MORNING I GAVE HIM LIST OF INCIDENTS OF OCTOBER
14 AND 15 WHICH TRANSMITTED TO US BY TEL AVIV DAO'S IR
6 849 0476 77. BOUTROS NOTED WITH SMILE THAT THESE HAD
ALL INVOLVED EXCHANGES BETWEEN PARTIES ON LEBANESE SOIL
AND THAT NONE OF THE FIRING HAD BEEN DIRECTED AT ISRAEL.
"THAT'S WHY THEY TOLD ME EVERYTHING WAS QUIET." HE THEN SAID
THAT LEBANESE WERE NOT READY FOR ILMAC MEETING IN ANY EVENT
BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT SAY DEFINITELY WHEN THE PALESTINIAN
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WITHDRAWAL AND DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS COULD TAKE
PLACE. FRANKLY HE WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTLOOK AT
THIS POINT. THE PALESTINIANS, UNDER PRESSURE FROM REJECTIONIST
ELEMENTS AND LEBANESE LEFTIST GROUPS, WHO WERE RESPONDING
TO IRAQI AND LIBYAN GUIDANCE, WERE POSING CONDITIONS WHICH
WERE UNACCEPTABLE.

3. I ASKED IF THESE CONDITIONS INCLUDED ONE THAT THE LEBANESE CHRISTIAN MILITIA MUST WITHDRAW AT THE SAME TIME AS THE PALESTINIANS. HE ASKED WHERE I HAD HEARD THIS AND I SAID REFLECTIONS OF IT WERE IN THE LOCAL PRESS. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS INDEED PART OF THE PROBLEM AND INDICATED THERE WERE OTHER CONDITIONS HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS BUT WHICH LEBANESE THEMSELVES WOULD NOT ACCEPT.

4. I THEN ASKED IF HE THOUGHT PLO STILL WANTED IMPLEMENTATION OF SHTAURA ACCORD. HE SAID PLO SEEKING TO FIND COMMON GROUND BETWEEN LEBANESE AND REJECTIONIST-LEFTIST POSITIONS WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTIES. HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES OF THEIR DOING SO AND ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT LEBANESE SHOULD DO IN EVENT THEY FAILED.

5. I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME THERE WERE THREE POSSIBILITIES. ONE WAS THAT THE SHTAURA ACCORD WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED; SECOND WAS THAT IT WOULD NOT AND SITUATION WOULD LAPSE BACK INTO THE ANARCHY THAT PREVAILED BEFORE, OR WORSE, AND THAT THE ISRAELIS EVENTUALLY WOULD INTERVENE AGAIN. THIRD POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE SOME FORM OF UN INTERVENTION, ALTHOUGH WE ALL REALIZED THE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN THAT SOLUTION. I SAID ONE STEP GOL MIGHT TAKE INTERNALLY WAS TO ASK MOSLEM LEADERS TO WORK ON THE LEBANESE LEFTISTS, INCLUDING MURABITUN (NASSERISTS), WHO HAVE SUDDENLY EMERGED AS NEGATIVE FACTOR IN EQUATION AND WHO ARE, IN
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GENERAL, MOSLEM EXTREMISTS.

6. BOUTROS SAID THAT MOSLEM FRIENDS OF GOVERNMENT WERE THE WORST ENEMIES OF THE MURABITUN. NEVERTHELESS PRIME MINISTER HOSS WAS MEETING WITH A MURABITUN REPRESENTATIVE LATER IN THE DAY IN AN EFFORT TO DO JUST WHAT I HAD SUGGESTED. HE WAS NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC AS TO THE OUTCOME. HE HAD SPENT MOST OF OCT 16 (SUNDAY) WITH PRESIDENT TALKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUTH AND THEY HAD LITTLE TO OFFER. THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT ASSAD'S INTERVENTION WITH ARAFAT OF THE WEEK BEFORE HAD NOT BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE AND DID NOT KNOW HOW MUCH MORE THE SYRIANS COULD DO TO HELP. IRAQIS AND LIBYANS WERE UNDERTAKING A WELL COORDINATED EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THE SHTAURA ACCORD. LEBANESE HAD LITTLE TO PLAY WITH. IT WAS VERY EMBARRASSING AND DISCOURAGING.

7. MAJOR HADDAD. THERE WAS ONE CHEERFUL NOTE IN THIS RATHER GLOOMY DISCUSSION. BOUTROS SAID MAJOR HADDAD HAD AGREED WITH THE GOL POSITION THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THE SOUTH AND STIPULATED ONLY THAT THE LEBANESE REGULAR TROOPS UNDER HIS COMMAND BE INTEGRATED WITH THE ARMY

AND KEPT IN PLACE. INTEGRATION POSED NO PROBLEMS. LEAVING THEM IN PLACE WOULD BE POSSIBLE AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM.

8. COMMENT: WE ARE IN CRUCIAL PHASE AS FAR AS SHTAURA ACCORD CONCERNED. OUR OPTIONS ARE LIMITED AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. NEVERTHELESS, SUGGEST THAT WE TAKE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

A. DEMARCHES WITH SYRIANS AND SAUDIS TO GET THEM TO HELP PLO TO PUSH REJECTIONISTS TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING WITH LEBANESE GOVERNMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION SHTAURA AGREEMENT.

B. WEIGH IN WITH ISRAELIS TO GET THEM TO TAKE A MORE
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COOPERATIVE AND LESS EXIGENT STANCE VIS-A-VIS LEBANESE. FULLY REALIZE THAT WE HAVE BEEN MAKING SUCH EFFORTS CONTINUOUSLY AND BELIEVE THEY HAVE AND SALUTARY EFFECT, BUT WONDER WHETHER IF ISRAELIS REALIZED THAT PROSPECT FOR WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIANS SUDDENLY GROWING DIMMER THEY MIGHT FIND IT POSSIBLE TO BE LESS DEMANDING WITH LEBANESE. BELIEVE EVEN PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIANS WOULD BE IN COMMON INTEREST AND ASSUME ISRAELIS UNDERSTAND THIS, WHATEVER THEIR PRESENT NEGOTIATING POSTURE MIGHT BE. THIS IS PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT FOR THEM TO SHOW THEIR FLEXIBILITY.

C. RECONSIDER FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME POSSIBILITY OF UN INVOLVEMENT AS DEUS EX MACHINA. I FEAR THAT WITHOUT IT LEBANESE MAY NEVER GET THIS THING TOGETHER.
PARKER

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